

Claims

1. A method of automating a workflow, comprising:
transmitting, to a multifunction peripheral, information that identifies a
5 name and a present state of the workflow at the multifunction peripheral;
the multifunction peripheral accepting, by way of a user input, a
modification to the workflow; and
the multifunction peripheral inserting the modification into the workflow.
- 10 2. The method of claim 1, additionally comprising saving the modification
and the workflow in a storage device.
3. The method of claim 1, wherein the modification is the addition of a
task to the workflow.
- 15 4. The method of claim 1, wherein the modification is the deletion of a
task to the workflow.
5. The method of claim 1, wherein the modification pertains to receiving
20 a user input at the multifunction peripheral.
6. The method of claim 1, wherein the modification pertains to printing a
document at the multifunction peripheral.
- 25 7. The method of claim 1, wherein the modification pertains to one of
receiving and transmitting a facsimile of a document at the multifunction
peripheral.
8. The method of claim 1, wherein the modification pertains to scanning
30 a document into the multifunction peripheral.

9. The method of claim 1, wherein the modification pertains to a task that is to be performed at a multifunction peripheral that performs a subsequent task in the workflow.

5 10. The method of claim 1, wherein the modification pertains to a task that is to be performed at a multifunction peripheral that performs a previous task in the workflow.

10 11. The method of claim 1, further comprising the step of presenting a list of tasks of the workflow.

12. The method of claim 11, wherein at least one task of the list of tasks corresponds to a task that has been previously performed in the workflow.

15 13. The method of claim 11, wherein at least one task of the list of tasks corresponds to a task that has not yet been performed in the workflow.

20 14. The method of claim 1, further comprising the user placing the multifunction peripheral into a workflow-training mode.

25 15. The method of claim 1, wherein the name and the present state of the workflow are presented to a user by way of a printed list, and wherein the user input to the multifunction peripheral comprises the user marking entries on the printed list.

16. The method of claim 1, wherein the printed list includes a bar-coded label that identifies the printed list and the present state of the workflow to the multifunction peripheral.

17. A system for automating tasks of a workflow, comprising:
a computing device that accepts inputs identifying at least some of the
tasks of the workflow;

5 a plurality of multifunction peripherals that perform the at least some
tasks of the workflow, wherein
the plurality of the multifunction peripherals accepts inputs that modify the
workflow.

10 18. The system of claim 17, wherein the computing device includes a
memory that stores the workflow modified by the accepted inputs.

19. The system of claim 17, further comprising a storage device that
stores the workflow modified by the accepted inputs.

15 20. The system of claim 17, wherein the tasks of the workflow include
printing material using at least one of the plurality of multifunction peripherals.

20 21. The system of claim 17, wherein the tasks of the workflow include
scanning material into at least one of the plurality of the multifunction
peripherals.

22. The system of claim 17, wherein the inputs that modify the workflow
are user inputs that add a task to the workflow.

25 23. The system of claim 22, wherein the task added to the workflow is a
request for a user input at one of the plurality of multifunction peripherals.

30 24. The system of claim 22, wherein the task added to the workflow is a
task that instructs one of the plurality of the multifunction peripherals to print a
page.

25. The system of claim 22, wherein the task added to the workflow is a task that instructs one of the plurality of the multifunction peripherals to accept a page that is scanned into one of the plurality of the multifunction peripherals.

5 26. The system of claim 17, wherein the inputs that modify the workflow are user inputs that delete a task of the workflow.

27. The system of claim 17, wherein the inputs that modify the workflow are in the form of a list having machine-readable markings that identify a name
10 and a present state of the workflow and at least some of the tasks of the workflow.

28. The system of claim 17, wherein the inputs that modify the workflow are in the form of touch screen inputs received by way of a user interface of one
15 of the plurality of multifunction peripheral.

29. In a multifunction peripheral,
a method for modifying a workflow, comprising:
receiving a list of workflow tasks from a communications network;
20 presenting at least some of the workflow tasks to a user via a user interface;
accepting a modification to the workflow via the user interface; and
inserting the modification into the workflow.

25 30. The method of claim 29, further comprising the step of receiving an input that identifies the user to the multifunction peripheral, the receiving an input step being performed prior to the receiving a list of workflow tasks step.

31. The method of claim 29, additionally comprising the step of saving
30 the modification and the workflow in a memory.

32. The method of claim 29, additionally comprising the step of transmitting the workflow tasks, including the modification, to a second multifunction peripheral.

5 33. The method of claim 29, wherein the communications network connects the multifunction peripheral to a computing device that transmits the list of workflow tasks to the multifunction peripheral.

10 34. The method of claim 29, wherein the workflow represents a process that includes one of printing material with the multifunction peripheral, scanning material into the multifunction peripheral, sending an electronic message, encrypting information representing the material, transmitting a facsimile of the material, receiving a facsimile of the material, and storing information representing the material.

15 35. The method of claim 29, wherein the user interface includes at least one of a badge reader, a fingerprint reading device, a thumbprint-reading device, and a signature pad.

20 36. A system for automating a workflow, comprising:
 means for accepting a list of tasks of the workflow, the tasks of the workflow being performed by at least one multifunction peripheral;
 means for presenting to a user, by way of the at least one multifunction peripheral, at least some of the tasks of the workflow; and
25 means for accepting from the user a change to the order of the tasks performed by the multifunction peripheral.

30 37. The system of claim 36, wherein the means for accepting the list of tasks further comprises a network interface that permits the at least one multifunction peripheral to communicate with a second multifunction peripheral.

38. The system of claim 36, wherein the means for presenting the at least some of the tasks of the workflow is a display located on the peripheral.

39. The system of claim 36, wherein the means for accepting a change
5 to the order of the tasks performed by the multifunction peripheral includes a means for detecting that a bubble has been filled in at a particular location.

40. The system of claim 36, wherein the means for accepting a change
to the order of the tasks performed by the multifunction peripheral includes a
10 touch screen.